— TO THE —

Startforth Rural District Council.

Annual Report, 1902.

GENTLEMEN,

I.

I am sorry to have again to report a slight increase in the mortality returns, 45 deaths having been registered of persons in or belonging to my district, *i.e.*, four more than during the preceding year. This produces an annual death-rate of 16·9 per 1,000 inhabitants as per census of 1901.

The Infantile mortality was identical with that of the preceding year, seven deaths having occurred under the age of one year. Four of these were caused by acute Bronchitis.

Eighteen Deaths were registered amongst persons over 65 years of age, the two oldest having been a male and female, aged respectively 89 and 87 years.

Diseases of the Respiratory Organs accounted for eight deaths, giving an annual rate of 3·006 per 1,000 of population.

There was a slight increase in the number of Deaths ascribed to Phthisis and other tubercular diseases, three having been registered during the year, or 1·12 per 1,000 inhabitants.

Heart Disease was productive of thirteen Deaths, a very remarkable increase of twelve on the number of the preceding year.

There were no Deaths ascribed to Infectious Disease.

Seventy-six Births were registered during the year.

II.

With regard to the rate of general sickness, I may say that it has been above the average nearly all through the year. This can be accounted for by the very adverse climatic conditions prevalent, more especially during the second and third quarters.

There was also a considerable amount of Infectious Disease all over the district. Altogether twenty cases were notified to me, namely :—

Erysipelas	2 cases
Scarlet Fever	17 ,,
Enteric Fever	1 ,,
Total	20 cases

Scarlet Fever appeared to be spread over the greater part of the district, the cases having occurred in Ovington, Lartington, and Bowes. Although only 17 Notifications were sent in to me, I found on investigation that these did not represent all the cases, particularly in the Bowes District, where, probably owing to the mildness of the disease, the parents did not consider it necessary to call in Medical advice, and thus, unfortunately, aided in spreading the infection. The epidemic attained such proportions that it was considered advisable to close the School and thoroughly disinfect it.

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Three cases of Scarlet Fever occurred in one of the Cat Castle Quarry Huts. As these are built of wood, and not in a satisfactory condition for purposes of isolation, I had the patients removed to the Hury Infectious Hospital, and thus checked the spread of the infection.

The single case of Enteric Fever was notified from Bridge End, Startforth, and was caused by a local sanitary defect. This was remedied, and no further case occurred.

There was a slight epidemic of Mumps in the Barningham District, necessitating the closure of the Village School for a short period.

I am glad to say that there was very little Diarrhœa during the past year. This is probably ascribable to the unusually cold and wet weather prevalent during the summer months.

III.

From a sanitary point of view the district continued fairly satisfactory. I had to find fault with the condition of the Huts at Cat Castle. A slight improvement has been effected in them, but they are still far from sanitary.

The village of Boldron is now supplied with abundant and good water, and I am glad to see that the scheme for supplying the village of Bowes has also been approved, and will in course of a short time be carried out.

All Dairies, Cow-sheds, Factories and Workshops have been regularly and systematically inspected, and in the majority of cases found in a satisfactory condition.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

ALFRED H. SEVIER, M.B.,

Medical Officer of Health.

W. R. ATKINSON, PRINTER, MARKET PLACE, BARNARD CASTLE.